United Nations S/2009/131

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 March 2009

Original: English

# Identical letters dated 2 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to draw your attention to recent and alarming terrorist activities carried out against Israel emanating from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. These ongoing attacks not only hinder efforts to reach a stable and durable ceasefire, but also represent an ongoing threat to the peace and security of Israel, as well as the people of Gaza.

On 1 March 2009 alone, 12 Qassam rockets were fired at the Israeli city of Sderot from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. One of the rockets landed next to a private residence, causing property damage.

One day earlier, on 28 February 2009, one advanced Grad rocket hit a school in Ashkelon, destroying classrooms and spraying pieces of shrapnel in all directions. Two civilians were wounded in the attack. Had the school building not been closed for the Jewish Sabbath, there likely would have been many more casualties. As a result of this attack and the ongoing security threat, schools are closed and classes are suspended across Ashkelon, which constitutes a humanitarian problem.

Prior to these and other attacks last week, since Israel declared a unilateral hold-fire on 18 January 2009, there have been nearly 100 rocket and mortar attacks from the Gaza Strip. These attacks clearly demonstrate that Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups continue to undermine regional stability and seek to murder, injure and terrorize Israeli civilians.

In response to these ongoing attacks, Israel has the inherent duty to exercise its right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The Government of Israel will continue to safeguard the security of its citizens and will ensure that the situation in southern Israel does not return to the status quo ante of December 2008. Israel will not tolerate, and will respond accordingly to attacks against its citizens.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-25801 (E) 060309